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ART WORLD FORUM BERLIN

Event Report: *'Leading Cultural Growth'*

In association with Art. Talking Business., Art World Forum hosted its European debut titled *"Leading Cultural Growth"* on 14th September at the Stiftung Brandenburger Tor in Berlin.

Formatted as a half-day art business seminar and brunch, alongside the 6th Berlin Art Week, the theme welcomed international industry players, at the forefront of change, to address the global changing environment, the emerging initiatives taking flight, and the dynamic between conventional methods and digital means.

The day started with an introductory approach to the international art market. Openly addressing its history, typical means of business and global reach, the debate then addressed habits and options of curiosity for change.

The first discussion set the scene within convention. Welcoming Nicole Stave, Owner of the Bechyne Castle and Stava Art Collection, alongside Paul Spies, Director of the City Museum Berlin and Chief Curator of the Humboldt Forum, the pair picked at cultural heritage. Notably crediting legacies, impact and a sense of community, the dilemma lay not only in getting a greater audience involved, but also questioning how best to promote the space. With an abundance of potential exhibition space, how can contemporary art find its way into traditional venues?

With castles and church conversions in play, the discussion relayed over into transit stations – the airport. Claudia Schachenmann, Director of Bureaux Schachenmann, PLP Architecture, introduced the newest adaptation of a Freeport model – the ArtHub at the Circle, Zurich airport. Currently under construction with an impressive complex underway, art is one category taking the lead. Introducing art not merely as an asset but as an element within the 'art and lifestyle' genre.

Notoriously known for disrupting the status quo, the art market encourages an open mind to newer perspectives (a welcome suggestion quoted by Veronica Neo, Co-founder and Director of Art World Forum).



Following-up on the latter, and moving further into the lifestyle domain, Elizabeth Markevitch, Founder and President of Markevitch Media GmbH, broke into digitalisation - availability of artwork online, whether it be viewed on phone, laptop or television. With a televised application titled ikonoTv, which hosts a substantial number of works by old masters and emerging talents on demand makes the experience truly global.

To then state the obvious, *"you're then briefly touching on copyrights. Does this mean you deal with artists directly? And if so, with regards to rights, do they give you exclusivity or is the content re-formatted?"* asked Ulli Sigg, renowned art collector and pioneer of Chinese Contemporary Art.

Working directly with artists also drew on Daniel Lev-er's opening line, CEO of ArtRunners. With the day's only panel focused on the physical and digital means, opportunities and challenges of transporting art, Lev-er encouraged the audience to think behind the scenes. Quoting Jeff Koons' *'Balloon Dog'*, whose customised crate cost \$1million, or how 36 million transactions account for an estimated \$54 billion industry, the message was clear – the market is in need of efficiency and reliability. Other than security, technology assists in global reach, time and cost savings (especially when galleries are notably spending 60-80% of their costs on shipping works to art fairs).

On a rather different note, and within the realms of transporting art online, Jeni Fulton, Editor-in-Chief of Sleek Magazine stated, *"If you think about the most viewed artwork, you probably saw it on Instagram – possibly Yayoi Kusama's 'Infinity Room' at David Zwirner gallery. Instagram is the biggest image sharing platform. It's become vastly important for the art world, allowing you to identify the latest exhibitions and direct your attention to what's new. Even publications are being trafficked through Instagram to find their stories."*

To summarise the day, the discussions addressed three key points - accessibility, participation and the experience.

In a culturally rich European centre, Berlin was ideal for boasting alternative perspectives. To revert back to the theme of the day, *"Leading Cultural Growth"*, the day picked on the dynamic between traditional methods alongside digital platforms. The essence was not in light of a debate, nor a quantifiable attempt in determining which method is more fruitful, but rather that the two must exist in parallel should greater impact be an aspiration within reach.

Contact:

To discuss future sponsorship or partnership opportunities please contact:
Anni Oates: anni@artworldforum.com / +65 9010 4595

